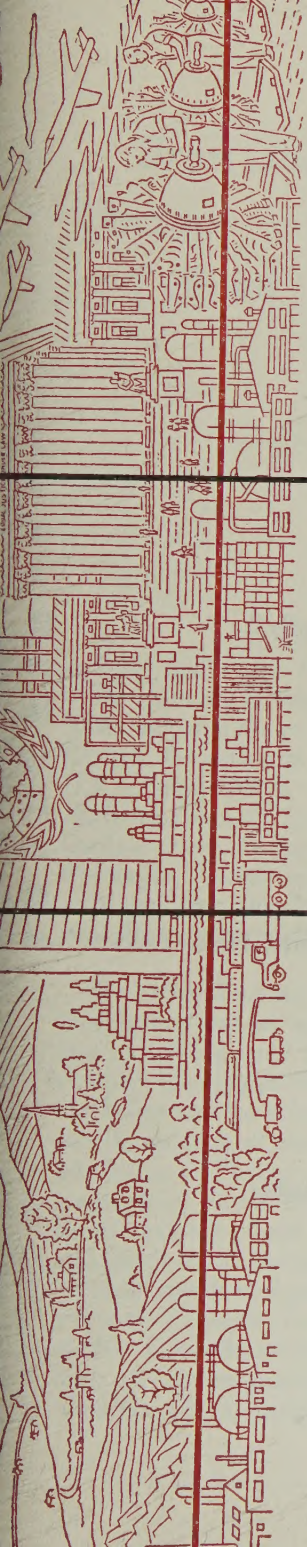

A Social Progress Reprint

THE PROBLEMS OF ALCOHOL

FACTS and FANCIES

THE PROBLEMS OF ALCOHOL

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November 1957

A Social Progress Reprint

Department of Social Education and Action
Board of Christian Education
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.
830 Witherspoon Building
Philadelphia 7, Pa.

From This Vantage Point

A RECENT ARTICLE in *The AA Grapevine* (the monthly publication of Alcoholics Anonymous) reviews the record of the churches in dealing with the modern problem of alcoholism. While praising the program developed by the Protestant Episcopal Church, the article points out that the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. pioneered in calling attention to the problem as inviting Christian concern. The writer of the article had in mind the 1946 General Assembly pronouncement on "The Church and Alcoholic Beverages," which analyzed the principal issues related to drinking in present-day American culture and inaugurated a bold "new approach" for the churches.

The now-not-so-new approach had the following elements: (1) a recognition that we are dealing not with a problem that is single and indivisible (and that calls for a single solution), but with a complex of many problems related to drinking; (2) a concern for alcoholics and for other victims of alcohol, taking into account recent knowledge of the true nature and extent of the problem of alcoholism and of the social damage related to the disorder; (3) an emphasis on education that makes use of trustworthy information about alcohol's effects in the human body and in the body politic and which avoids the questionable techniques and stereotypes of the old-style antialcohol propaganda; (4) judicious co-operation with a variety of agencies working in such fields as temperance education, alcohol research, alcoholic rehabilitation, public control, legislation; (5) an emphasis on voluntary abstinence that is based on Christian ethical insights and which avoids the categorical con-

demnation of all persons who use alcoholic beverages (a featuring mark of an older approach which most churches believe now to be unrealistic and unacceptable).

In this issue of SOCIAL PROGRESS we try to answer some of the questions often raised in serious discussions of the problems of alcohol. This is by no means a comprehensive treatment of the subject such as we attempted in the March, 1955, issue of our magazine. The principal General Assembly deliverances of recent years, dating back to the historic statement of 1946 appear on pages 25 to 31.

In the last ten years there has been a great deal of sound research on the problems of alcohol. We have new understanding of why people drink of drinking as a custom (a much more complicated business than "social pressure"), of the great human cost of alcoholism, of useful approaches to many specific problems tied to drinking. We also have a better appreciation of the relevance of Christian theological insights and ethical teachings to the issues. Perhaps it is time for a restudy and possible re-evaluation of our common Christian responsibility toward the problems of alcohol.

—The SEA Staff

For individual and group study of the responsibility of the churches in relation to alcohol we recommend the following:

Alcohol and Christian Responsibility. This is an 86-page booklet, published in 1954, which discusses the nature and scope of the problems of alcohol, the effects of alcohol in the human body, the social damage related to drinking, the problem of alcoholism, steps toward solutions, the role of the churches. (Sixty-five cents; order from nearest Presbyterian Distribution Service.)

Alcohol Re-examined. This is a reprint of the popular and useful March 1955, issue of SOCIAL PROGRESS. The treatment is brief but accurate and fairly comprehensive. It includes a section on the work of the Yale Center of Alcohol Studies. (Fifteen cents; order from nearest PDS.)

How to Help an Alcoholic. This is a 1952 Westminster Press publication in the Pastoral Aid series. It is the kind of book that can be placed in the hands of a person who wishes to deal effectively with an alcoholic. It views the problem from the perspective of the family in which alcoholism occurs. ($1.50; order from any Westminster Book Store.)

THE PROBLEMS OF ALCOHOL

What Do We Mean?

When we talk about the "problems of alcohol" we refer to the fact that alcohol's influence, when it adversely affects behavior, is felt in a great many places—in family life, in the shop and office, in the courts, on the highways, in hospitals and sanatoriums. There are various aspects—medical, moral, domestic, legal, financial, religious, social, occupational. It is much more realistic, more truly descriptive of the complexity of the matter, to talk about the "problems related to alcohol" than about "the alcohol problem."

The frequent assumption of many who speak of "the alcohol problem" is that there is a single, over-all solution. This is an intriguing assumption, but it is unrealistic and impractical. Efforts to diminish the difficulties related to drinking should take into account the fact that we are dealing not with one problem, indivisible, but with many problems, calling for a variety of treatments.

How Many People Are Affected?

AN ESTIMATED 75 million persons in the United States are occasional or regular users of alcoholic beverages. This is approximately 67 per cent of the population in the age bracket in which drinking customarily occurs—fifteen years and over. The raw estimate of the number of persons in our country who drink needs to be further analyzed and interpreted in order to be most meaningful.

a. Drinking patterns vary greatly from section to section and from group to group in the total population. For example, there are more users of alcoholic beverages among men (75 per cent) than among women (56 per cent), in the under-fifty age bracket than among persons fifty years of age and over, among persons whose parents or grandparents were born abroad than among those whose parents and grandparents are native-born, among persons of Jewish (87 per cent) and Catholic (79 per cent) background than among Protestants (59 per cent), among the prosperous (70 per cent) than among the poor (62 per cent), among persons with high school education (70 per cent) than among persons who never attended or did not finish high school (62 per cent), in large cities (72 per cent to 77 per cent) than in small cities (61 per cent) and rural areas (46 per cent to 57 per cent).

b. There are drinkers and drinkers. It may be interesting to note that there are so many persons who use alcoholic beverages, but for many specific purposes it is quite ridiculous to include in the same set of statistics the person who takes a drink once or twice a year (New Year's Eve, for example, or at a wedding reception) or a Jew who uses wine on ceremonial occasions, and a drunken driver or a skid-row alcoholic. Among the 75 million persons in the United States who are loosely classified as drinkers, about 7 million are "problem drinkers"—that is, their drinking is frequently excessive and involves them in a variety of problems. Of this number, about 4.7 million, by the most recent estimation, are alcoholics. It is evident from these figures that roughly one in ten or twelve of all who begin to drink gets into trouble through his use of alcoholic beverages.

c. The social effects of the use of alcoholic beverages are not confined to the 7 million problem drinkers or to the 75 million persons who drink. Every person who encounters difficulty in his drinking involves other persons, usually many, in his trouble—his family, his friends, his neighbors, his associates at work. It is not an exaggeration to suggest that 25 million persons in America, many of whom are nondrinkers, are affected by what we loosely call problem drinking. This is approximately one in seven of our population.

d. Another way to get at the scope of drinking in America is through data relating to the per capita consumption of alcohol. It should be fairly obvious that comparisons based upon per capita consumption of *alcoholic beverages* without regard to the wide variation in the alcoholic content of the various beverages are misleading. The only true index to the amount of drinking in America is the per capita consumption of "absolute" alcohol, not alcoholic beverages, among persons fifteen years of age and over. Since 1950 there has been a perceptible decrease in the per capita consumption of alcohol in the United States.

e. Statistics relating to the incidence of alcoholism among men

in the United States are so dramatic and ominous as to be almost unbelievable. We know with fairly high accuracy (1) the number of persons who are afflicted with alcoholism (4.7 million), (2) the ratio of men to women among alcoholics (about 5 to 1), (3) the age distribution of alcoholics (about 75 per cent between 30 and 50 years of age), and (4) the number of men in the American population between 30 and 50 years of age (23 million). Putting all these factors together, we come up with the astounding revelation that among men between 30 and 50 years of age, the population group that includes most of the wage earners of our American homes and most of the fathers of our growing children, one person in ten is a victim of alcoholism. In the face of this shocker, who can be unconcerned about the problems of alcohol?

WHY Do People Drink?

THERE is no single or easy answer to this question. People use or do not use alcoholic beverages for a great variety of reasons, both social and personal.

a. A great deal of the talk about "social pressure" as a major factor in motivating drinking is superficial and misleading. To say that many people drink "for business reasons" or "in order to be a good sport" or "to keep my husband company" is to state popular rationalizations "after the fact" which do not usefully illustrate the cultural forces in the emergence of drinking. "Social pressure" in relation to drinking is very complex and operates on deeper levels and in subtler ways than we commonly suppose. Whether or not a person chooses to drink depends pretty much (one is almost tempted to say, entirely) upon the strength of the customs or the mores with regard to the use or nonuse of alcoholic beverages that operate in the primary group or groups to which he is related.

For example, a faithful Mormon who looks to the Mormon community for approval and acceptance is almost certain to be a nondrinker because of the strength of the Mormon tradition of total abstinence. A Jew, on the other hand, devoted to the Jewish tradition in which wine is used ceremonially, is very likely to

be a social drinker. It is also unlikely that he should ever drink to excess because of the strength of the Jewish emphasis on sobriety.

A few years ago the Yale Center of Alcohol Studies made an extensive survey of drinking practices among college students in the United States. This survey, as reported by Dr. Selden Bacon and Dr. Robert Straus in *Drinking in College*, indicated that an individual is greatly influenced by the behavior patterns of his own social group with respect to the use of alcoholic beverages. Individual deviation is always possible, of course, but it is less likely to occur when the group has a strong, consistent pattern of behavior, well integrated with its other customs. The survey emphasized the importance of cultural forces as opposed to individual determination in motivating drinking.

b. A factor of great importance in explaining why people drink is the element of personal enjoyment and satisfaction. Indeed, we can assume that this is part of the motivation in practically all drinking. The very fact that so many people choose to use alcoholic beverages would seem to say that drinking does something for them that they find pleasant or satisfying. Many people feel that alcohol really performs for them a useful function in the dissolving effect it has upon shyness and other inhibitions which tend to make social contacts difficult for them. Unfortunately, the drinker cannot limit this function to the one area or aspect of his personality that he may wish to relax. The effect goes farther than is desirable, sometimes with unhappy results. The control of drinking itself may be diminished, leading to intoxication.

c. The alcoholic beverage industry itself may be a considerable factor in drinking among many persons who are not strongly inclined toward abstinence. In many communities, especially in our cities, liquor is only as far away as the nearest telephone or drugstore. The easy availability of alcoholic beverages is bound to be an influence in the consumption of alcohol. We should note, however, that the alcoholic beverage industry in the United States is largely a result, rather than a significant cause, of a wide desire on the part of the American people for the satisfaction of certain "needs" through drinking. To say that the industry alone is responsible, or is largely responsible, for the problems related to drinking in America is a dangerous oversimplification.

d. Dr. Bacon and Dr. Straus point out (in *Drinking in College*) that personal preference, biological forces, and ethical considerations are all pertinent to the question of why people use alcoholic beverages. But these do not explain drinking. "Seeing drinking as a custom affords a more realistic and broader view, more effective discrimination and insight, and the possibility of developing safer and surer techniques of control." The importance of this concept of drinking as a custom (a much more profound and deeper concept than "social pressure") can hardly be overstated for those interested in alleviating and preventing the problems of alcohol.

Is Liquor Advertising an Important Factor in Motivating Drinking?

Many people believe that the churches should unite in an all-out effort to abolish liquor advertising. They especially desire to put an end to the advertising of alcoholic beverages over radio and television. They point to Canada as offering encouraging demonstration of what the elimination of such advertising can mean.

The attack on liquor advertising assumes that its purpose is to persuade nondrinkers to become users of alcohol, and that it is particularly pernicious in influencing young people to drink. Opponents of liquor advertising point to misleading and erroneous statements and suggestions in alcoholic beverage publicity. They point also to the large sums of money that are spent by the industry to attract new drinkers. Much is made of the claim that liquor advertising violates the right of privacy of those who oppose the use of alcohol in our society.

Spokesmen for the beverage industry insist that the right to advertise cannot be denied a legally established industry, and they point out the importance of advertising as a means of protecting the public against inferior products. They claim that most alcoholic beverage advertising, if not all, is directed to people who drink and is intended to promote one brand as over against other brands, or one kind of beverage (wine, for example) as over against other kinds (distilled and brewed).

It should be noted that the alcoholic beverage industry submits advertising matter for review, voluntarily, to the Alcohol Tax Division of the Internal Revenue Office in Washington, which has set up standards of accuracy and good taste. Distilled beverages are not advertised on radio or television, or in Sunday newspapers, and women are not associated with drinking in the copy. The beer industry, on the other hand, does advertise widely, both in newspapers and magazines and over the air waves.

We all recognize that advertising in America is really big business and that the advertising of alcoholic beverages is a significant part of that business. Moreover, because competition is so strenuous and sometimes bitter within the alcoholic beverage industry itself, it resists strongly every attempt to restrict its advertising.

Dr. Raymond McCarthy of Yale University, in commenting on the issue of liquor advertising, has this to say: "It seems highly unlikely that a newspaper, magazine, or television ad for a beverage containing alcohol would of itself have sufficient impact to convert the nondrinker. That advertising does influence behavior in the direction of certain practices is unquestionably true, but that advertising alone is responsible is highly doubtful. Behavior is the result of a series of stimuli acting upon

the individual. There must be a cumulative readiness to act. It is an oversimplification to assume that the stimuli generated by advertising alone may precipitate the act. To a considerable degree, drinking practices in America today are the result of custom and social trends of which advertising is only one aspect."

He goes on to say: "Some advertising men are of the opinion that they can change American tastes and behavior through skillful advertising. This point of view is open to challenge. If it is implied that by advertising alone this can be done, certainly changes have occurred in American life which appear to parallel at least the development of commercial campaigns. An example of this is to be found in the rise in cigarette smoking among women. Whether it is the result of advertising, or, more probably, an accompaniment to social change consequent upon World War I, is not clear. That the advertising people were able to capitalize on the change is evident. It is probable that something of a similar kind has taken place in connection with changing attitudes toward the use of alcohol in our society. It is extremely doubtful that advertising alone produced these changes, and it is unlikely that a reduction in the amount of present-day advertising would in turn result in reduced consumption of alcohol." (From *Teen-Agers and Alcohol.* Publication Division, Yale Center of Alcohol Studies. Used by permission.)

Advertising by itself may be a considerable factor in persuading a person to use beer instead of wine, or to buy one brand of whisky instead of another, but it is probably true that advertising has a very slight effect upon a person who is inclined against drinking. Even so, there is something incompatible between an emphasis on sober thinking and sober living in our schools and churches on the one hand and, on the other, an avalanche of liquor promotion using every available medium and method of appeal, with its subtle persuasions to drink.

HOW Does It Affect the Human Body?

CULTURAL anthropologists tell us that nearly all primitive peoples knew about and used alcoholic beverages. They often attributed the strange effects produced from drinking these beverages to a mysterious influence or divine presence. There is still a great deal of mystery about how alcohol really acts in the human body, but modern research has gone far to explain what goes on when alcohol is received into the system.

The subject of this section has been discussed in such available publications as "Alcohol Re-examined" (SOCIAL PROGRESS, March, 1955) and *Alcohol and Christian Responsibility*. A number of points deserve emphasis in our present discussion.

a. We should keep in mind that alcohol, in its action in the body, is an anesthetic. That means that alcohol produces a progressive depression of the central nervous system, an effect that is characteristic of anesthetic drugs.

It is highly misleading to refer to alcohol as simply a drug. The term applies to many kinds of substances —sedatives, hypnotics, narcotics, and analgesics, as well as anesthetics. It is especially misleading to call alcohol "habit-forming" or "addiction-producing," which suggests that its use will always produce compulsive craving, dependence, and addiction in any person. The Expert Committee on Alcohol of the World Health Organization says that "alcohol must be considered a drug whose pharmacological action is intermediate in kind and degree between addiction-producing and habit-forming drugs, so that compulsive craving and dependence can develop in those individuals whose make-up leads them to seek and find escape in alcohol. With this substance the personal make-up is the determining factor, but the pharmacological action plays a significant role. Damage to the individual may develop, but does so in only a minority of users. The social damage that arises extends, however, beyond these individuals themselves."

b. Alcohol is often called a stimulant because a person may feel exhilarated, strong, capable when he has a few drinks under his belt. The truth is that alcohol is a depressant. Here is a paradox that needs a bit of explaining. After a drink or two, the anesthetic action of alcohol begins to

affect the higher functions of the brain, those having to do with judgment, self-criticism, self-control, inhibitions. A subtle change takes place as alcohol begins to act in the system. The fears and uncertainties that usually serve as a restraint upon behavior are subdued. A person may feel greatly stimulated, but this is an illusion. It may seem that the motor has been accelerated, but really the brakes have been eased.

c. As to whether or not alcohol is a food, it depends on what you mean by the "loaded" word. If by food you mean a substance that is actually used in the body when consumed through the digestive system, that provides something the body needs, then alcohol is a food, because it is a highly potent source of calories. The trouble is that alcohol provides nothing else—no minerals, no proteins, no vitamins. Minute amounts of these other substances may be present in alcoholic beverages, especially in the malted liquors, but alcohol itself, and alcoholic beverages generally, have practically no nutritional value.

d. Many persons who are opposed to the use of alcoholic beverages base their case against drinking largely on the damage that alcohol is supposed to cause in the human body apart from its action in the central nervous system. Researchers in this field (biochemists and physiologists) report that the direct effect of alcohol upon the organs and tissues of the body is not great. They point out that when alcohol enters the stomach it stimulates the flow of digestive fluids, and the alcohol itself is quickly diluted to a non-irritating concentration. In the blood, alcohol is always diluted far below the point at which it could irritate even the most delicate tissues of the body. This concentration seldom reaches .40 per cent—four parts of alcohol in one thousand parts of blood.

Old-fashioned "laboratory demonstrations" intended to show alcohol's effects on animal tissues and other substances (putting an angleworm in a glass of whisky and watching it curl up and die) are completely misleading because they employ alcohol at much stronger concentrations than ever occur in the human body.

There was a time when a number of organic disorders that occurred with relative frequency among excessive drinkers were believed to be the direct result of alcohol's action in the system. It is now known that most of these disorders are related to some form of malnutrition, and that their apparently high incidence among heavy drinkers is very likely due to the fact that people who drink to excess are often extremely careless with their eating and suffer nutritional deficiencies.

Excessive drinking is often a contributing factor in the development of liver trouble. Some physiologists believe that in certain people alcohol may affect the liver in such a way as to permit the formation of fatty tissue. After a rather long period of heavy drinking (it may take ten years), a condition develops which is called cirrhosis of the liver. The disease also appears in persons who do not drink, and is generally regarded by physiologists as related to some kind of nutritional deficiency.

Even so, cirrhosis of the liver is to be found among alcoholics with such relative frequency that the death rate from this disease is used by experts in estimating the incidence of alcoholism in large population groups such as a state or a nation. The principal variable in the "Jellinek formula" for calculating the number of alcoholics in a region is the known death rate from cirrhosis of the liver.

e. The debate goes on and on as to whether a person who drinks is likely to live as long as a person who abstains from the use of alcoholic beverages. There have been several studies of the mortality records of large life insurance companies. In many of these studies, it has been found that the reliability of the data, by modern research standards, is not good. As may be expected, the results are uneven and inconclusive. Two of the most noted studies of this sort came to opposite conclusions about the effect of moderate drinking on the length of life. In general, the surveys tend to show that moderate drinkers probably live as long as abstainers, while chronic excessive drinkers may expect a life span as much as ten years shorter than their moderately drinking and abstemious fellows.

f. The heart of the matter is the action of alcohol in the central nervous system, where it functions as an anesthetic, a depressant. The result of this action is to change behavior. Here is the real danger, the seat of all the trouble related to the use of alcoholic beverages.

It is impossible to build a convincing case against drinking by pointing out what it may do to the liver or the stomach or the kidneys of a person who drinks to excess. In many excessive drinkers these things simply never happen. The same can be said for the effect of drinking on the span of life as an argument against alcohol—there are too many exceptions. The "exceptions" do not prove anything, but they certainly weaken, for popular use at least, any argument against drinking based upon physiological "facts."

When we emphasize the action of alcohol in the central nervous system and its resulting effects in the realm of behavior, we are using an argument that cannot be refuted.

Is Alcoholism a "Disease"?

An alcoholic may be described as a person with an unmanageable craving for alcohol. His condition is characterized by a tendency toward addictive or uncontrolled drinking. Repeated or continuous excessive drinking produces problems in various aspects of his life which become chronic and ever more serious. As the condition progresses, the alcoholic becomes increasingly dependent upon alcohol to meet a variety of

situations, including even minor irritations and boredom.

Alcoholics apparently receive a satisfaction from drinking beyond that achieved by the millions of drinkers for whom the use of alcohol is a source of gratification one way or another but never an end in itself. There is evidence to suggest that people who become alcoholics are the victims of some kind of personality imbalance before they begin to drink. There are varying degrees of imbalance, which are aggravated by prolonged excessive drinking. There is also mounting evidence to suggest that in many persons who become alcoholics there is a physiological disturbance or peculiarity which tends to predispose them to an exaggerated reaction to alcohol.

It should be clear from the start that an alcoholic is suffering from a disorder that is deep-seated and real. His drinking is pathological. Before the onset of alcoholism, he may drink for a variety of personal and social reasons, but all these "reasons" become completely unimportant when the symptoms of the disorder take over. From that point on he is obsessed with the idea that he needs alcohol in order to be normal. Alcohol thus becomes the most important thing in his life. To observe an alcoholic when he is trying to break away from drinking is to begin to understand the agonizing desperation of his craving.

It is entirely correct to refer to alcoholism as a disease. In popular thinking, however, a disease implies the presence of a virus, a bacillus, or a disturbed organ or system. The word suggests that a set of symptoms can be identified and definite treatment prescribed. It also suggests that the condition can be avoided by following certain precautions. It is with difficulty that popular thinking identifies disease with mental and emotional disorders, where public understanding is limited and prejudiced. Because alcoholism does not fit the popular concept of disease, the writer prefers to refer to the condition as a disorder. He does this simply to avoid an argument.

We should make clear, however, that to call alcoholism a disorder, or even a disease, is not to suggest that an alcoholic is not morally responsible for his actions. Haggling over the question of whether alcoholism is a disease or a sin usually reveals bad thinking about both the nature of alcoholism and the meaning of transgression. An alcoholic never needs to be told that he is doing wrong. He knows with a deep awareness the evil results of his excess in his own life and in the lives of others. He knows also that his condition is an affliction over which he has now virtually no control.

What Is the Secret of AA?

Dr. Howard Clinebell, Jr., minister of a Methodist church in Great Neck, New York, and lecturer in the Department of Religious Education at New York University, made a study of Alcoholics Anonymous in connection with a broader study of the problem of alcoholism which gave rise to one of the most useful books on this subject, *Understanding and Counseling the Alcoholic:* Through Religion and Psychology (Abingdon Press, 1956). He testifies to the usefulness of AA in helping alcoholics to achieve recovery, meaning continuous sobriety. He analyzes AA's success as follows:

"AA has demonstrated such amazing effectiveness, first on the level of producing initial sobriety, because:

"1. It waits until the individual is at least slightly receptive to help. This means that the alcoholic has suffered enough through his drinking so that the pain outweighs the pleasure (or perverted satisfaction) of alcoholism. AA rightly recognizes that an alcoholic's own desire for sobriety is an indispensable ingredient in any plan of help. AA is more successful because it relies on attraction as its means of bringing new members. The fact that it is an attractive fellowship enhances its effectiveness. The essential ingredient in this attractiveness is AA's lack of moralism and lack of unction.

"2. AA immediately relieves the stresses of the advanced stages of alcoholism. A psychotherapist may seek to go directly to the underlying causes of the addiction; the evangelistic approach is immediately concerned about the general condition of the soul; AA, on the other hand, concentrates on the secondary level of the problem—helping the alcoholic to stop drinking by helping to diminish the pain and problems resulting from the excessive drinking itself.

"3. It does this by providing the alcoholic with certain tools such as the 24-hour plan which it teaches him to use to control the craving. This is in contrast with the evangelistic approaches which sought to produce initial sobriety by means of a torrid religious experience. Because many alcoholics have strong prejudices against anything religious, the AA method appeals to many who cannot respond to the other.

(*Continued on page 18*)

Alcoholics Anonymous' Test

FOR THE PROBLEM DRINKER

Reprinted from Better Homes & Gardens Magazine

1. Have you ever tried to stop drinking for a week (or longer), only to fall short of your goal?

2. Do you resent the advice of others who try to get you to stop drinking?

3. Have you ever tried to control your drinking by switching from one alcoholic beverage to another?

4. Have you taken a morning drink during the past year?

5. Do you envy people who can drink without getting into trouble?

6. Has your drinking problem become progressively more serious during the past year?

7. Has your drinking created problems at home?

8. At social affairs where drinking is limited, do you try to obtain "extra" drinks?

9. Despite evidence to the contrary, have you continued to assert that you can stop drinking "on your own" whenever you wish?

10. During the past year have you missed time from work as a result of drinking?

11. Have you ever "blacked out" during your drinking?

12. Have you ever felt you could do more with your life if you did not drink?

Four "yes" answers indicates a serious drinking problem—now or in the future.

—Copyright, 1957, Meredith Publishing Co., Des Moines, Iowa.

THE TWELVE STEPS

Step One: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.

Step Two: Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Step Three: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.

Step Four: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Step Five: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Step Six: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Step Seven: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Step Eight: Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

Step Nine: Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Step Ten: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

Step Eleven: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out.

Step Twelve: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

—From the book Alcoholics Anonymous, *published by AA Publishing, Inc., Box 459, Grand Central Annex, N.Y.*

(Continued from page 15)

"4. AA immediately reduces many of the stresses of guilt and fear by allowing the alcoholic a new way of thinking about his problem. The AA conception of alcoholism—recognizing a physical factor in the sickness—renders the alcoholic's behavior intelligible to himself and greatly reduces the fear and guilt which were supplying him with added desire for the 'blessed oblivion' of alcohol.

"5. AA immediately surrounds him with an accepting fellowship of individuals who have been through his experience and can therefore establish rapport when professional counselors have failed. It is this supportive fellowship which carries him through the first trying days of recovery. The fact that the fellowship is frequently focused through an individual sponsor who can become a father-symbol for the new AA 'baby' is important. (Of course, many AA's have no sponsor.) The dependent relationship in AA allows the course of social regression which the alcoholic has followed to be reversed. The AA in-group can serve as a substitute family. Again, AA uses group therapy rather than religious therapy to promote initial sobriety.

"6. AA's fine relationship with hospitals, doctors, and alcoholic clinics allows the newcomer to have the medical adjuncts to therapy which are often so important in establishing initial sobriety. This is in contrast with what might be called the 'all religious' approach.

"Beyond this success in inducing initial sobriety, AA is most effective in helping alcoholics achieve prolonged sobriety because:

"1. In contrast with the rescue mission and Salvation Army, AA deals with a smaller proportion of those whose alcoholism is complicated by the added problem of homelessness.

"2. The fact that AA depends neither on religious thrill (as evidenced, for example, by the lack of group singing) nor on a 'hot flash' type of religious experience, makes for a more stable sobriety. Religious ecstasy is apt to produce an emotional hang-over, which is destructive to sobriety. In AA, religious resources are made available on a more temperate basis and are utilized more for maintaining than producing sobriety. Because of its permissive attitude toward theological ideas, it accepts the alcoholic at the point he has reached in his religious life and allows his religious formulations to grow as his experiences change. Because the 'spiritual angle' of the AA program is so subtle, it can 'slip up on a fellow,' as one AA put it.

"3. AA provides substitute satisfactions to replace those of alcohol. Enjoyable and continuing fellowship in a group overcomes loneliness, a great enemy of prolonged sobriety. In addition there is an abundance of oral satisfactions—smoking, talking, and oceans of coffee—to replace the orality of alcoholism.

"4. It sustains sobriety by keeping the alcoholic busy helping 'those who do not know.' It gives him a sense of mission and of unique usefulness. Becoming a sponsor imposes a responsibility on a person to set a good example for his 'baby.' This motivates the sponsor in the direction of continued sobriety. It also helps him feel important, boosting his self-esteem.

"5. By providing a suggested series of steps, AA provides a continuing program of spiritual growth which is important, especially after the first enthusiasm of belonging has dimmed. It is significant that half of these steps are devoted to altering the attitudes and interpersonal frictions which, in alcoholics, tend to produce a binge.

"6. AA is successful in sustaining sobriety because it brings the pressure of responsibility to bear on the alcoholic when he is able to handle it. In the early phases the person finds help in the 'allergy' conception. As he acquires more stable sobriety he is confronted by the necessity of taking responsibility for the changing of those attitudes which lead him to drink. Then he is motivated to use the Twelve Steps. [See page 17.]

"7. AA is more successful in maintaining sobriety because it is successful in strengthening the person's *real* self-esteem, as distinguished from his grandiosity. It does this by keeping the initiative with him throughout the process, by making him feel accepted in a group, by respecting his rights as an adult to think and do what he himself wants to (including getting drunk), and by giving him a sense of unique usefulness in helping other alcoholics. As AA increases his self-acceptance it diminishes his need for defensive grandiosity, which, like medieval armor, was a terrible weight as well as a protection.

"8. AA tends to produce long-term sobriety because it is non-authoritarian in organization and constituency. Each group is autonomous in all matters which affect only that group. Central agencies are considered as co-ordinating and service groups for AA as a whole. This decentralized democracy distributes the sense of responsibility to each member and reduces the inherent frustrations of authoritarian or hierarchical organizations. This makes for healthy group life and thus enhances the prospects for individual sobriety. The fact that AA is a self-help program in which there are no outside 'authorities' is very significant in the light of the alcoholic's tendency to be rebellious toward authority.

"9. The fact that AA can provide continuing group support makes for long-term sobriety. AA is so well distributed that wherever a member goes he is likely to find a group."

(From *Understanding and Counseling the Alcoholic*, by Howard J. Clinebell, Jr. Copyright 1956 by Abingdon Press. Used by permission.)

What Has Yale Accomplished?

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. on at least two occasions in recent years has expressed confidence in the Yale Center of Alcohol Studies at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, as a dependable source of information about many of the problems related to drinking.

There has been considerable misunderstanding about the work that Yale has been doing in this field, and no little controversy. Many of the extreme conservatives in the antialcohol movement have accused the Yale Center of having "sold out" to "the liquor crowd," or at least of being greatly influenced by the alcoholic beverage industry in the findings they report of their studies.

Such charges are, to say the least, grossly unfair. They reflect an ignorance of what Yale is doing as well as an inability to distinguish between real research and trying "to prove" something.

The activities of the Yale Center include basic research on the problems of alcohol, conducting an annual Summer School of Alcohol Studies to which students come from many countries, publishing the *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol,* which is regarded as the finest scientific journal in the field, maintaining a clinic for alcoholics, and acting as a general source of advice and information on all sorts of problems related to drinking. One of the most important activities of the Yale Center, about which there is little general publicity, is the Abstract Archive of Alcohol Literature. The Archive is in the form of keypunch and slotted cards on which are printed abstracts of all available scientific literature on alcohol. The Archive is being continuously expanded and kept up to date. The World Health Organization has provided for the publication of the cards, and today there are thirty-four repositories of the Abstract Archive in nineteen countries, ten being in the United States. The Archive has made possible research which, without its service, could

never have been accomplished.

Research, of course, is the core of the activities at the Yale Center. Results of the research are published in the *Journal* and elsewhere. The Yale Center leaders do not expect any person or any group to accept uncritically what they say or can prove from their studies. Yale simply studies and reports with earnest fidelity to scientific purpose and method. The absurdity of the legend that the Yale Center orients its findings to what "the liquor crowd" want, is evident in the fact that the alcoholic beverage industry is full of persons who are doing their best to subvert the influence of the Yale studies.

Yet, it is amazing how otherwise responsible persons persist in misinterpreting and misapplying some of the Yale findings. Several years ago, for example, the Yale Center published the results of a survey of the drinking patterns of Americans of Italian ancestry. One of the purposes of the study was to discover the reasons, if any, for the remarkably low incidence of alcoholism among persons of Italian parentage. One key, the researchers discovered, was the way in which children were introduced to drinking in many Italian homes. A misleading account of the survey appeared in a national temperance journal under the heading "Yale Now Recommends Alcohol for Children." Yale recommended nothing of the sort. In this study, the Yale Center specialists were simply trying to discover some of the alcoholic facts of life in a minor segment of the American population.

Research programs such as those carried on at the Yale Center of Alcohol Studies should be encouraged and supported by the churches as long as their purposes and methods are truly scientific and as long as the conclusions reached are consistent with the actual findings of the studies.

The Church's Role

——————What About Temperance Societies?

The goals of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in relation to the problems of alcohol are enunciated in the social deliverances of the General Assembly. The "alcohol pronouncements" of recent years appear on pages 25 to 31 of this issue of SOCIAL PROGRESS.

Our churches are encouraged to participate in the work of state and national temperance societies when the purposes and programs of these organizations are in harmony with the declared goals of our church. The General Assembly has specifically suggested that our churches should withhold endorsement of such temperance groups as do not support our concern for alcoholics, or which in other ways exhibit unrealistic views of the problems related to drinking.

Churches working independently and alone cannot make much progress in dealing with many of the problems of alcohol. In this field, as in others, churches have a clear responsibility to encourage and assist all efforts that are in keeping with their own purposes. At the same time it should be recognized that churches are failing in their responsibility if they simply turn the job over to an agency over which they have little or no control. Churches must not relinquish initiative in developing their own programs of education and action relating to the problems of alcohol. The responsibility of the churches in this matter is a fact that must be recognized and accepted by temperance groups seeking the support and participation of the churches.

Occasionally a zealous worker for temperance may become so negative in his attitude toward efforts to understand alcoholism and to help alcoholics that he makes co-operation extremely difficult. In one state, for example, a temperance organization seeking to represent the churches lobbied successfully against the renewal of a grant by the state legislature for a pilot project in alcoholic rehabilitation. This sort of representation is so completely a denial of our proper Christian concern for alcoholics as to merit rejection by the churches.

The case for voluntary abstinence from the use of alcoholic beverages may be summarized as follows:

- Social drinking, no matter how harmless it may seem to be, is sometimes an introduction to excessive drinking. We have already seen that the risk is fairly high—one in ten or twelve of all who begin to drink gets into trouble through his use of alcoholic beverages. It is almost universally true that every alcoholic was at first a social drinker. We should keep in mind that it is impossible, by present knowledge, to tell in advance who can drink in relative safety and who may be headed for difficulty if he begins to drink.
- Social drinking is the setting or context in which problem drinking occurs. Stated in another way, if it were not for the vast numbers of social and moderate drinkers, the liquor industry could not exist and problem drinking would be greatly alleviated.
- Social drinking is the principal influence in the recruiting of new drinkers. The behavior of a drunken person offers no inducement to the new drinker; it is the example of the social drinker that he is likely to follow. It is moderate drinkers much more than excessive users of alcohol who perpetuate and extend drinking patterns and customs within social groups.
- We should remember that even slight amounts of alcohol can affect a person's efficiency and behavior in such a way as to produce trouble. One does not have to be drunk to get into difficulty through alcohol. Studies of alcohol's effect upon the performance of skilled automobile drivers show that the danger begins with the first drink (and it is the kind of danger that is not confined to the person behind the wheel). There is no doubt that a great many gruesome automobile accidents in these days are caused by people who are only temporarily and mildly under the influence of alcohol.

So goes what many regard to be a valid case for voluntary abstinence. It is, of course, a prudential argument. It says in effect that on the basis of the greatest good for the greatest number of persons, abstinence would seem to be better than indulgence. From the Christian standpoint, however, there is a moral argument which goes beyond the counsel of prudence. We have responsibility for one another; we are "bound in the bundle of life." Our Christian vocation is to help others to be all that God wants them to be. At very least, we are to heed the New Testament admonition that "no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."

In pressing the argument based on moral responsibility, which is valid for Christians, we must remember that all about us are people who do not or will not recognize a duty toward their fellow men such as we have attempted to set forth, or they do not interpret their duty in the same way. It would seem to be

their right to think differently from us on the subject of social drinking.

We have consistently used the phrase "voluntary abstinence" to define the church's goal. The word *voluntary* suggests two things—(1) the decision not to drink is not forced on a person but is one that he makes for himself, and (2) it is a decision that he makes for himself without judging or criticizing those who do not choose to abstain.

Should the Churches Condemn Drinking?

Many of our readers will already have inferred a warning against the attitude that lumps all drinking in a single condemnation. We believe that the argument for voluntary abstinence is a strong one for those who accept its premises. We also believe that many people with undeniable sincerity and integrity, and with ethical sensitivity equal to our own, choose not to abstain. We believe that this open-mindedness on the subject of drinking is not leniency or compromise, but common sense informed by the Christian spirit. We believe that no man is perfect, that all men stand under God's judgment, that the way of obedience is open both to those who abstain and to those who, in good faith and with a sense of our common responsibility, choose not to abstain.

By our understanding of the meaning of Christian liberty (as developed, for example, in Rom., ch. 14) and of Christian responsibility, it would seem that a person's choice with regard to the use of alcoholic beverages should be a voluntary one which takes into account the possible effects of his decision upon himself and others.

Dr. Clinebell speaks usefully on this subject in the book to which we already have referred. He says: "If it is assumed that, so far as alcohol is concerned, there are only two groups ethically speaking—drinkers and nondrinkers—an unfortunate splitting of the ranks occurs. Those who hold very strongly to the abstinence position often forget that there is another group who are as opposed to excess as they are and who might be allies in developing sanctions against drunkenness. From our study of the Jewish culture we know that such sanctions are extremely effective in preventing alcoholism. We also know that unified sanctions against drunkenness do not exist in American life in general, and that their absence contributes to the high rate of alcoholism. Those who are compulsive in their espousal of abstinence tend to drive the real moderationists—whose existence they do not recognize—into identifying themselves with those who use alcohol to excess.

"Even the churches tend to divide ranks along these lines. The churches in the temperance tradition have tended, on the one hand, to regard their position as the only 'Christian' one, to misunderstand the nature of alcoholism, to divide all persons into two groups—drink-

ers and nondrinkers. They have tended to ignore the more fundamental problem in alcoholism—the sick personality—which should have been their primary concern as Christians. On the other hand, the nontemperance churches, partly as a reaction to the temperance churches, have tended to overlook the realistic dangers of the use of alcohol in our neurotic culture, to treat drinking as if there were no moral problem involved, and to ignore the seamy side of drinking. Both sides have oversimplified the ethical complexities of the problem. Thus the churches, which should have been helping to form unified cultural sanctions concerning the use of alcohol to excess, have contributed to the confusion."

It seems to us that the approach of the churches to the problems of alcohol should not draw a line between the "problem" and the "solution" in such a way as to put everyone who uses alcoholic beverages on the side of the devil and everyone who abstains on the side of the angels. The approach should be made in such a way that persons who conscientiously do not choose to abstain, but who are nonetheless deeply disturbed about many of the problems of alcohol, can work with the rest of us toward their solution.

For Reference

GENERAL ASSEMBLY PRONOUNCEMENTS, 1946-1957

THERE are four reasons why alcoholic beverages merit new concern. First, the strength of the social pressures toward drinking is increasing. Second, scientific studies have made available new tools for understanding the problem. Third, only an approach which does not oversimplify the nature of the problem can have a chance of success. Fourth, the accelerated tempo of the machine exacts an increasing toll of deaths and injuries through the use of alcoholic beverages.

1. Aid to Victims of Alcohol

We begin with pastoral and social concern for alcoholics and excessive drinkers and for their families. Alcoholics, as well as their families, need the full ministry of the church. We recognize that once drinking has passed a certain point, alcoholism is a disease; that is, the drinking cannot be stopped by a mere resolution on the part of the drinker. He needs treatment, not punishment; understanding, not condemnation.

Under no conditions will pastors permit drinking behavior to produce a withdrawal of pastoral concern for drinkers. We shall encourage the establishment of clinics and other facilities, when competently conducted, for the diagnosis, referral, and treatment of alcoholics. We shall give all possible aid to those organizations that work on a religious basis for

the cure and rehabilitation of alcoholics.

While recognizing the dual origin of alcoholism and excessive drinking in both personal instability and social pressures, and accepting alcoholism as a disease which requires treatment, we reassert our conviction that the ethical aspects of the use of alcoholic beverages are underlined by our concern on behalf of the victims of alcohol.

2. Alcohol Education in the Church

Alcohol education in the church must be persistent and many-sided, reaching adults no less than children and youth, accurate in its facts, uncompromising in its claims, intelligently graded, and imaginatively presented. It should proceed despite those who deny there is an alcohol problem or those who believe the problem can be solved by a single act of legislation.

The aim of alcohol education is conviction and decision based on accurate knowledge. Dissemination of facts is not enough, but the facts presented must be both accurate and relevant. The following are our guiding principles of action:

a. The program shall be conceived in long-range terms, not merely as a special promotion for a limited period. At the same time, it will utilize such imaginative and dramatic devices as will explain and convince about the seriousness of alcohol as a social problem.

b. The program will look to the results of scientific study for accurate knowledge of facts, but it will not claim falsely the support of science for any action program.

c. While the program will lead toward commitment and conviction from the point of view of Christian ethical standards, it will clarify and explain the nature and strength of the social pressures toward drinking, as well as help to create affirmative ways of conduct before which the pressures shall be powerless. The method is to win understanding, not to marshal arguments.

d. While alcohol education will be related to many activities within the church, it must also be an object of special concern and program.

3. Alcohol Education for the Public

While the chief educational task of the church is with its own constituency, we also feel a Christian social responsibility for the guidance of the general public. We declare the following as our principles of action:

a. To encourage relevant public agencies to include in their programs scientifically accurate information about alcoholic beverages. This means especially the public schools, but also public-health departments, liquor control boards, and other agencies.

b. While making clear our ultimate position in relation to alcoholic beverages, we will co-operate on aspects of alcohol education of the public with other groups, public and private, whether they share our ultimate convictions or not, provided the particular program deals with some real problem of alcohol, and provided our ultimate convictions are not compromised through the process of co-operation. Specifically, we will co-operate:

(1) With temperance groups—when they are not so exclusively preoccupied with immediate national prohibition as to impede action on educational and social control programs aimed at partial aspects of the problem.

(2) With alcoholism and education groups—provided they take no official stand that might compromise our convictions concerning drinking by nonalcoholics or the trade in alcoholic beverages.

(3) With scientific groups—provided their methods are consistent with the canons of science as applied to alcohol research, and provided the conclusions drawn from their studies are consistent with what the studies themselves have disclosed.

(4) With public-spirited groups—within or outside the churches—who are concerned with any significant aspect of the alcohol problem, provided such co-operation does not compromise the ultimate position and witness of the church.

4. Social Control of Alcoholic Beverages

We have affirmed our belief in a vigorous program of continuing education, based on science, illuminated and motivated by Christian ethics, leading toward voluntary abstinence and social concern. We affirm our belief in a program leading toward eventual elimination of the production and use of alcoholic beverages

through public action in community, state, and nation. We believe that education and public action go hand in hand; that the second will work finally only as it is based on the first; and that attention must be given to the second if there is to be any chance of achieving the first.

It seems apparent that any program attempting to eliminate the production and use of alcoholic beverages by legislation on a national scale would be unsuccessful unless supported by an overwhelming majority of the people. The advocacy of immediate national prohibition would seem at this time an unwise strategy in moving toward social control of alcoholic beverages. Preoccupation with national prohibition as an immediate objective may run the grave danger of aiding liquor to become even more deeply entrenched in American life.

If there is real progress in the care and treatment of alcoholics, in research on alcohol problems, and in alcohol education, we believe that it will be increasingly possible for a better-informed and voluntarily convinced public to institute and support more effective and stringent control measures over the alcoholic beverage trade.

We believe there are certain measures that can be initiated now or in the near future which can reduce some of the evil effects of alcohol, and which can aid the public in understanding the nature of the alcohol problem. These are not final steps. But if they are not earnestly sought and achieved, there will be slight chance of securing better social control.

a. Revision of the alcoholic beverage tax structure. This should be in the direction of encouraging the dilution of proof spirits and fortified wines, through a tax program providing adequate incentive to distributors for such reduction.

b. Enforcement of laws regarding issuance of liquor licenses and regulations of hours of sale. This should be in the direction of strictly regulating and decreasing the hours when alcoholic beverages may be sold by package and for consumption on the premises.

c. Prevention of sales to minors. This would be chiefly a matter of encouraging the enforcement of existing laws, by a type of personnel concerned with the total welfare of young people.

d. Social use of public revenue from the sale of alcohol. The fact that public revenue from the sale of alcoholic beverages is used for general social purposes misleads the public as to the antisocial nature of the traffic itself. As long as alcoholic beverages are sold, we believe that revenues derived from the trade should be used solely for alcohol education, for the rehabilitation of alcoholics, and for the relief of their families.

e. Regulation of advertising of alcoholic beverages. We deplore the effect that the advertising of alcoholic beverages is destined to have, especially upon the mind of youth, through its unwarranted and false claims, which go beyond public presentation of brand names, common to all advertising, and aim to invest the use of alcohol with prestige and social desirability. This calls for regulatory practices which, if not voluntarily put into effect by advertising agents, should be imposed by appropriate organs of government.

f. Local or state elimination of traffic in alcoholic beverages. This means what is commonly known as local option, eliminating the trade or traffic in neighborhoods, communities, or states where at least a majority of the citizens agree that such action shall be taken.

g. Indirect control of alcohol consumption through (1) the elimination of social evils such as poor housing, inadequate recreation facilities, and broken homes; (2) a realization of the meaning of life, which the church should inspire through an effective program of evangelism.

Conclusion

The use of alcohol as a beverage is nearly as old as human history. It is also true that beverage alcohol in concentrated form has been available for only three or four centuries, and that the social problem of alcohol in its present acute form has existed only since that time.

Beverage alcohol is a serious social problem, and cannot be ignored. It is also a complex problem and cannot be solved at once. As Christians we intend to act, taking those specific steps which we believe will lead us most surely toward our

goals of voluntary abstinence and elimination of the traffic.

We therefore recommend:

a. That General Assembly urge all ministers and members of our churches to consider social and business drinking practices in the light of Christian principles, for both individual and social well-being.

b. That General Assembly call for a major effort in temperance education and action throughout our churches, and direct the Department of Social Education and Action of the Board of Christian Education to develop and promote a church-wide program based upon the principles in this report.

c. That General Assembly reaffirm the action of previous General Assemblies in respectfully requesting the President to remove from military establishments all alcoholic beverages except for medicinal purposes.

d. That General Assembly record its support of an early interdenominational program of temperance education and action under the leadership of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

e. That General Assembly instruct the Department of Social Education and Action to prepare, with legal advice, a model bill prohibiting or regulating the advertising of beverage alcohol, a copy of said bill to be sent to the committees on social education and action of all synods and presbyteries. The model bill as prepared should be introduced in the legislatures of the several states by committees on social education and action in co-operation with other Christian agencies, and the passage of the bill insured by the marshaling of an aroused public opinion of the Christian citizens of the various states. It is further recommended that this Assembly lay upon the hearts of the members of these committees that they have a grave responsibility in preserving the integrity of the Christian home, now ruthlessly invaded by unchristian and antisocial forces.

—1946

ALCOHOL continues to be a major social problem in the nation. All too frequently the integrity and stability of the family are tragically undermined by the effects of alcohol on the personalities of individuals within the family circle. Because of these personal and social effects of the local liquor traffic we recommend that our church constituency move with increasing rapidity toward the solution of this problem by way of the following positive strategy:

1. That members of our church acquaint themselves with the 1946 Assembly pronouncement on "The Church and Alcohol," and also make use of the study guide *Let's Face the Issue*, which is based upon this pronouncement.

2. That, through various adult and youth groups in the church, we secure and use all available literature on this problem which results from careful research and from the writings of persons who are professionally equipped to speak with expertness on the problem.

3. That we as Christians recognize our responsibility to individuals who have been injured physically, emotionally, and spiritually by their indulgence in the consumption of liquor and other alcoholic beverages. It is our obligation to work for the rehabilitation and re-education of such persons. There are at our disposal certain channels, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, through which our humanitarian concern in this matter might find expression.

4. That we urge upon our total membership to exercise their influence as citizens in formulating a program through which profits may be eliminated from the liquor traffic. At the same time we must resist the tendency to encourage the use of income from Government liquor monopolies as a substitute for taxes. It is important that a system shall not be established which would result in some of our important social institutions, such as education, relying upon revenue derived from the liquor industry.

5. That we join with other religious bodies in the effort to build a basis for personal resistance to the terrific impact of liquor advertising upon the habits of individuals in our population. ***—1949***

We urge all Christians to recognize that the greatest single factor in the prevention of drunkenness is the power of Jesus Christ directly applied to this problem in the life of the individual, and that all other means are dependent upon that for their effectiveness.

On many previous occasions the General Assembly has spoken clearly concerning the social and spiritual dangers involved in the use of alcoholic beverages, in the large industry producing them, in the appealing and not always accurate advertising done by it, and in the stake of the Government in this industry through receipt of several billions of dollars of tax money from this source. We wish to call attention particularly to the 1946 pronouncement of General Assembly upon this subject, as published with an exposition in the pamphlet *Let's Face the Issue.* We also urge the study of the recently published manual of alcohol education, *Alcohol and People.*

We commend the Division of Social Education and Action for its aggressive campaign of education, which has assisted many individuals in reaching the one fundamental solution to this problem—which is the personal decision to adopt total abstinence. We urge appropriate groups in churches, and particularly youth groups, to undertake such scientifically and spiritually based studies as the Division provides. Young people should be guided and encouraged in every possible way to resist the social pressures and propaganda that operate so powerfully today to motivate drinking and to adopt for themselves a nonalcoholic way of life. Adults in our churches should recognize their responsibility to provide a good example in sobriety and godly living by practicing and advocating complete abstinence from the use of alcoholic beverages.

We urge upon the members of our churches continued effort to eliminate liquor advertising from magazines, newspapers, billboards, radio, and television. Every church and every church member should support Federal legislation to this end.

Christians should be the first to recognize that, although every person has a moral responsibility for the use of alcohol, "alcoholics" as such must be treated as sick people. Church members should see to it that their communities provide modern facilities for the treatment of this disorder. To secure this end, we commend co-operation with "Alcoholics Anonymous."

The church should emphasize preventive as well as remedial control of the alcohol problem by encouraging constructive leisure-time programs, adequate recreational facilities, better housing, counseling services, and programs for stabilizing and enriching family life. ***—1950***

The General Assembly should again remind the churches and their members of our repeated stand against the use of alcoholic beverages, our continued opposition to the liquor traffic, and our deepening concern with the problem of alcoholism, reaffirming the deliverance of the 158th General Assembly in 1946.

In size, the alcohol problem continues to be large, although the national consumption of alcohol has not changed noticeably since 1947. The liquor industry has grown increasingly bold in seeking favorable legislation in many states. As a result there is no uniformity in the liquor control laws across the country. The control situation is desperately bad and getting worse. Many temperance groups, and many leaders in the temperance movement, fail to apprehend the true dimensions of the alcohol problem in America, and are unrealistic in their interpretations and methods.

We make the following recommendations:

1. We reaffirm the principle of voluntary abstinence from the use of alcoholic beverages. We call upon our churches to undertake programs of alcohol education in which this principle is clearly set forth.

2. We call upon our ministers and churches to be concerned intelligently and sympathetically with the problem of alcoholism and to support efforts for the aiding and rehabilitating of alcohol's victims and their families. We encourage co-operation with Alcoholics Anonymous.

3. We call for more effective and stringent control measures over the alcoholic beverage trade. We call for further regulation and restriction of alcoholic beverage advertising.

4. We encourage our churches to participate in the work of state and national temperance organizations when the purposes and programs of these organizations are in harmony with the goals of our church in relation to the alcohol problem. We would ask our churches to withhold endorsement of such temperance groups as do not support our concern for alcoholics, or in other ways exhibit an unrealistic or partial view of the alcohol problem. We express our confidence in the Yale Center of Alcohol Studies as a dependable source of information about many of the problems related to the use of alcoholic beverages, and commend its studies and publications to our churches and ministers. ***—1953***

BELIEVING that many General Assembly pronouncements concerning alcohol education have validated themselves as basic principles of education and action in this field, we would reaffirm their relevance to the present-day problem of the use and effects of beverage alcohol in our society.

Nevertheless, we are not content with the use that has been made of these pronouncements. They have served as an excellent statement of our church's position and as a platform for those already concerned about the problem, but they (1) have not yet reached the consciences of unconvinced members of our churches, nor (2) have they materially reduced social drinking acceptable to and practiced by many church members.

1. We call upon our ministers and churches to face more intelligently and sympathetically the problem of alcoholism, particularly as it relates to aiding and rehabilitating alcohol's victims and their families.

We earnestly encourage co-operation with Alcoholics Anonymous. We recommend to ministers and church leaders, as well as to families of alcoholics, such books of tested worth as *How to Help an Alcoholic*, published by The Westminster Press.

2. We encourage our churches to participate in the work of state and national temperance organizations whose purposes and programs are in harmony with the goals of our church.

The General Assembly in 1953 asked the churches to withhold endorsement of such temperance groups as do not support our concern for alcoholics or which in other ways exhibit an unrealistic or partial view of the alcohol problem. The Department of Social Education and Action is able to give appropriate counsel in this regard.

The 1953 General Assembly also expressed its confidence in the Yale Center of Alcohol Studies as "a dependable source of information about many of the problems related to the use of alcoholic beverages." It is important for the church to use scientifically reliable data, such as the Yale Center is able to provide, in building its program of alcohol education. However, we believe that it remains the responsibility of the church to be intelligent about, and sensitive to, the moral and ethical consideration of the alcohol problem.

3. We recommend a more vigorous program of alcohol education through our churches, homes, and schools.

Excellent resource and study material are provided by the Board of Christian Education through the *Faith and Life* curriculum and age group programs. Several useful pamphlets have been published by the Department of Social Education and Action.

4. We reaffirm our belief that the Christian ideal in regard to the use of alcoholic beverages is voluntary abstinence.

We urge every church member who uses beverage alcohol to consider prayerfully his moral involvement in maintaining the gigantic economic structure of vested interest which sells $9,000,000,000 worth of liquor to Americans every year, to consider the role he plays in perpetuating the social pattern which pictures drinking as smart, stimulating, distinguished, and ethically neutral, and to be ever mindful of the fact that this grim social and economic problem is a major social evil of our day.

Whether it be motivated as a positive witness against the economic and social forces which produce alcoholics, or a refusal to be implicated in the ethical responsibility for other men's destruction, or an expression of personal moral conviction, we reaffirm our belief that the ultimate Christian goal in relation to alcohol must be regarded as voluntary abstinence.

5. We call for more effective and stringent control measures over the alcoholic beverage advertising (newspapers, magazines, billboards, motion pictures, radio, and television) through legislation, Federal, state, and local. *—1954*

BELIEVING that the use of alcoholic beverages gives rise to some of the most distressing problems in the life of today, affecting adversely all ages and walks of life, and realizing that the traffic in such beverages wages an unceasing bombardment of our people with its misleading propaganda, and thereby makes converts to the use of its products,

The 169th General Assembly reaffirms the following pronouncements of the General Assembly of 1954:

"1. We call upon our ministers and churches to face more intelligently and sympathetically the problem of alcohol, particularly as it relates to aiding and rehabilitating alcohol's victims and their families. . . .

"2. We encourage our churches to participate in the work of state and national temperance organizations whose purposes and programs are in harmony with the goals of our church. . . . The Department of Social Education and Action is able to give appropriate counsel in this regard. . . .

"3. We recommend a more vigorous program of alcohol education through our churches, homes, and schools. . . .

"4. We reaffirm our belief that the Christian ideal in regard to the use of alcoholic beverages is voluntary abstinence.

"We urge every church member who uses beverage alcohol to consider prayerfully this moral involvement in maintaining the gigantic economic structure of vested interest which sells $9,000,000,000 worth of liquor to Americans every year, to consider the role he plays in perpetuating the social pattern which pictures drinking as smart, stimulating, distinguished and ethically neutral, and to be ever mindful of the fact that this grim social and economic problem is a major social evil of our day. . . .

"5. We call for more effective and stringent control measures over the alcoholic beverage advertising (newspapers, magazines, billboards, motion pictures, radio, and television) through legislation, Federal, state, and local." *—1957*

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